

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BONN 20769 01 OF 02 101101Z

22

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 /055 W

----- 074751

R 101043Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3993

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BONN 20769 01 OF 02 101101Z

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 20769

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GW

SUBJECT: VETTER ANSWERS CRITICISM OF DGB-FDGB EXCHANGE

REF: (A) BONN 19503; (B) BONN 19647; (C) BONN 20211

1. SUMMARY: IN AN ARTICLE IN THE "SPD PRESSEDIENST", DGB PRESIDENT VETTER SUPPLIED WHAT HE CALLED CONCRETE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT DGB-FDGB EXCHANGE. VETTER'S REPLY REPRESENTS ONE OF THE CLEAREST EXPLANATIONS OF AND ANSWERS TO CRITICISM OF THE WEST GERMAN UNION LEADERSHIP FOR EAST-WEST EXCHANGES SEEN SO FAR. A TRANSLATION OF THIS VETTER STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: MANY CITIZENS TODAY AGAIN ASK THE QUESTION IF IT IS AT ALL WORTHWHILE TO TALK "TO THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE". THE EXPATRIATION OF THE SINGER WOLF BIERMANN HAS INSPIRED WAVES OF ANTIPATHY AGAINST THE SED STATE, AND RIGHTLY SO. AT THE SAME TIME THE DANGER IS GROWING THAT OLD COLD WARRIORS HERE AND THERE ARE PLAYING INTO ONE ANOTHER'S HANDS AND TALKING THE TENDER PLANTS OF DETENTE TO DEATH. WE MUST NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN. THE BIERMANN CASE DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF ATTEMPTS TO TALK OBJECTIVELY WITH THE OTHER SIDE.

RECENTLY, I VISITED THE FDGB IN EAST BERLIN WITH A DELEGATION OF THE DGB EXECUTIVE BOARD. I KNOW THAT WE DID NOT RECEIVE MUCH FAVORABLE PRESS REACTION. MANY CONSERVATIVE JOURNALISTS EVEN DEFAMED US AS TROJAN ASSES, AS DUNCES WHO WOULD BLINDLY WALK INTO THE OPEN KNIVES OF THE COMMUNISTS. THE DGB AND ITS PRESIDENT WERE INDULGING IN ILLUSIONS, IT WAS SAID, WHICH WERE NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE PRACTICES OF THIS "INHUMANE REGIME."

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BONN 20769 01 OF 02 101101Z

ANYONE WHO THINKS THIS WAY UNDERSTANDS NEITHER THE TIMES NOR THE DGB. WE KNOW FROM PAINFUL PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ABOUT GDR DIRECTED SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. THERE HAVE BEEN ESPIONAGE CASES INVOLVING CONVICTIONS, PERSONS UNDER INVESTIGATION, AND CASES PENDING IN COURT. THIS WAS A REASON WHY CONTACTS WITH THE FDGB, OPENED FOUR YEARS AGO, WERE ULTIMATELY PLACED ON ICE. PERHAPS NEW SPIES AND AGITATORS WILL BE UNMASKED

TOMORROW. BUT IS THE FDGB RESPONSIBLE? DURING OUR VISIT IN EAST BERLIN WE EMPHASIZED STRONGLY THAT WE WILL NOT TOLERATE FURTHER SPYING AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN DGB UNIONS. FDGB PRESIDENT HARRY TISCH REPLIED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT SUCH THINGS AND THAT HIS ORGANIZATION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH SUCH ACTIVITIES AND FURTHER THAT, IF WE HAD SUCH IMPRESSIONS, WE SHOULD CONTACT THE GDR GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES. WHETHER WE BELIEVE HIM OR NOT, WE CANNOT DO MORE THAN THIS.

WHAT WE WANT ARE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE FDGB, A REGULATED TOGETHERNESS (NEBENEINANDER) JUST AS THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE TWO GERMAN STATES REFER TO. IN SPITE OF ALL CONTROVERSIES, WE WANT MORE FREEDOM FOR THE PEOPLE IN OUR DIVIDED COUNTRY TO VISIT EACH OTHER MORE EASILY AND FOR SEPARATED FAMILIES TO BE REUNITED -- IN ONE WORD: HUMANIZATION.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BONN 20769 02 OF 02 101106Z

22

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 /055 W

----- 074833

R 101043Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3994

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMEMBASSY LISBON  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BONN 20769 02 OF 02 101106Z

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 20769

SOME SAY THAT DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS  
HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO ONE ANOTHER, CANNOT LEARN  
FROM ONE ANOTHER, AND THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO FOSTER  
UNDERSTANDING IS BOUND TO FAIL FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.  
THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY SO. IN THE AREA OF PRACTICAL  
REPRESENTATION OF WORKER INTERESTS, BOTH SIDES CAN  
LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER. THIS BEGINS WITH THE LEGAL  
REPRESENTATION OF WORKERS AND ENCOMPASSES INDUSTRIAL  
SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION, YOUTH ACTIVITIES, AND  
HEALTH CARE. WE HERE IN THE WEST CANNOT CLAIM TO HAVE  
INHERITED THE ULTIMATE WISDOM.

ON THE IDEOLOGICAL FRONT, IT IS CLEAR THAT WORLDS SE-  
PARATE US. WE KNOW THAT AND WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN  
THAT. WE NEED NO SUPPLEMENTARY COURSE FROM SAPIENT  
PEOPLE. IN OUR TALKS WITH THE FDGB, NEITHER SIDE MADE  
THE SLIGHTEST ATTEMPT TO INDOCTRINATE THE OTHER.  
INSTEAD, WE MADE AGREEMENTS ON FURTHER EXCHANGES.  
EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH, WOMEN AND JOURNALISTS,  
A CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE WORKER FESTIVAL IN

SUHL AND THE RUHR FESTIVAL IN RECKLINGHAUSEN HAVE BEEN CONTEMPLATED, AND WE INVITED FDGB PRESIDENT HARRY TISCH WITH A TOP FDGB DELEGATION TO VISIT THE FRG.

I AM NOT AN ILLUSIONIST. I DON'T EXPECT ANY MIRACLES FROM MEETINGS WITH THE LABOR ORGANIZATION IN THE GDR, NO REMOVAL OF THE BERLIN WALL, OR EVEN ANY MAJOR STEP TOWARD GERMAN REUNIFICATION. WE WILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH A DIVIDED GERMANY FOR A LONG TIME; THE NEXT GENERATION AND, UNFORTUNATELY, PERHAPS THE FOLLOWING GENERATION WILL HAVE TO WORK WITH THIS PROBLEM -- AT LEAST AS LONG AS THE WORLD IS DIVIDED IN TWO MILITARY CAMPS. OUR CONVERSATION PARTNERS LEFT NO DOUBT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BONN 20769 02 OF 02 101106Z

THAT AS FAR AS THE FDGB IS CONCERNED, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY. WE NATURALLY DISAGREE.

WE DON'T PRESUME TO SAY THAT CONTACTS WITH THE FDGB WILL SHOW ANY REAL RESULTS IN THE LONG RUN. NO ONE KNOWS THAT. I KNOW ONLY THAT THESE CONTACTS MAY ASSIST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND WELL INTENTIONED CITIZENS AS THEY WORK TO PREVENT THE TIES TO THE OTHER GERMAN FROM BEING CUT OFF, AND MAY CONTRIBUTE TOWARD STABILIZING THE FEW BONDS WHICH HAVE REMAINED BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES. I AM ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THE WORKERS IN THE GDR WILL BE THANKFUL FOR OUR EFFORTS. UNQUOTE.

2. COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO VETTER'S ALMOST DEFENSIVE ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY HIS EAST BERLIN VISIT AND EAST-WEST TRADE UNION EXCHANGES IN GENERAL AS CONTRIBUTIONS TO DETENTE AND THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY, HIS COMMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR TWO ADDITIONAL REASONS. FIRST IS THE FACT THAT HE REACTED AT ALL. VOCAL PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST HIS VISIT OBVIOUSLY SURPRISED HIM NOT ONLY BY ITS INTENSITY, BUT ALSO BY THE FACT THAT CRITICISM CAME FROM NORMALLY SUPPORTIVE, OR AT LEAST SILENT, SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY. FOR THE FIRST TIME HE CAUGHT FLACK FROM CDU POLITICIANS, WHO UP TO THEN HAD REFRAINED FROM DIRECT CRITICISM OF DGB'S CONTACTS WITH THE EAST. SECOND IS THE METHOD WHICH VETTER USED TO REBUT THIS CRITICISM: THE OFFICIAL SPD PRESS SERVICE. BY NOT USING THE MYRIAD OF DGB PUBLICITY ORGANS AVAILABLE TO HIM, VETTER SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO RAISE THE DEBATE TO A POLITICAL LEVEL WHERE HE BELIEVES HIS ACTIONS CAN BE MORE EASILY DEFENDED AS DGB SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S OSTPOLITIK. AS VETTER POINTS OUT, THE EXPATRIATION OF WOLF BIERMANN RAISED AN OUTCRY IN SPD AND UNION CIRCLES, REFOCUSING

PUBLIC ATTENTION ON FRG-GDR RELATIONS AND SERVING  
TO EXACERBATE CRITICISM ALREADY BEING LEVELLED AT HIM  
AND THE DGB. THE ISSUE HAS RECEDED SOMEWHAT IN  
RECENT DAYS; IT APPEARS VETTER'S GAMBIT OF INVOKING  
SPD AUTHORITY WORKED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY.  
STOESSEL  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 BONN 20769 02 OF 02 101106Z

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, LABOR UNIONS, LABOR POLICY LINE, PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, LABOR OBJECTIVES, COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 DEC 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BONN20769  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760456-0591  
**From:** BONN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761251/aaaabsak.tel  
**Line Count:** 289  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 BONN 19503, 76 BONN 19647, 76 BONN 20211  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 31 MAR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by hartledg>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** VETTER ANSWERS CRITICISM OF DGB-FDGB EXCHANGE  
**TAGS:** ELAB, GE, (VETTER)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006